



## Regional Data Hub

The Australian Broadband Advisory Council (the Council) supports an accessible and reliable source of data for the purpose of regional planning, policy and decision making as proposed by the Regional Data Hub. However, it is important that the data is collected with a clear function or user base in mind.

The Council suggests that the usefulness of the Regional Data Hub would be enhanced if it is designed to enable mapping of connectivity in regional areas and how this aligns with service delivery and economic priorities at the local/regional area. Both the Council's Agri-tech Expert Working Group (AEWG) and the Health Expert Working Group (HEWG) identified mapping of data as an area for consideration, to enable connectivity gaps to be better targeted and addressed.

In order to ensure the Regional Data Hub can meet the needs of various user groups, including the Council, the Council recommends the following issues be considered as the Hub moves into its development phase.

### Spatial coverage

It is important that regional data is presented spatially to provide context to the data and ensure that it is being used appropriately. For example data for regional areas is often divided into significantly large geographies, incorporating many unique townships and regional centres that make place-based decision making difficult. A spatial presentation of the data will highlight gaps and areas for further investigation and ensure that broad areas of data coverage is not taken out of context.

### Functionality

While the National Maps website provides a good basis for mapping and geographic analysis, filtering and presentation of data is lacking with users having to search either individual Departments/themes to find the relevant data and the data itself not being presented in an easy to read format. The progress with the Australian Regions Dashboard provides a better filter functionality but because it is not linked to mapping tools it is often difficult to undertake a more holistic analysis and combine data.

### Connectivity

The AEWG noted that underneath the broad-brush strokes of carrier and NBN fixed and wireless networks, there can be localised connectivity gaps on, across and between farms. These connectivity gaps are also noted by the HEWG who have identified that peri-urban areas lack the connectivity requirements to participate in video telehealth consultations. The connectivity data would be further strengthened by enabling telecommunication providers to upload locations of communication infrastructure, as appropriate, which could also be useful in the decision-making process.

## Education and health services

Regional universities and vocational education and training (VET) providers are a major source of skills and employment for regional areas. Similarly regional hospitals also provide education and support to regional health care workers including networking, health updates and sharing latest findings.

Although both sets of data for regional education institutions and hospitals can be found on National Map and on individual websites, overlaying this data spatially with regional demographic, economic and connectivity data has not yet provided useful results due to the poor usability of the National Maps website and the difficulty in filtering/finding the data.

The Council would be happy to expand on our projected data requirements.